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In this Rattling the Cages panel talk, former political prisoners Eric King and Jason and Jeremy Hammond discuss state vs. federal prisons, solidarity inside and out, and readjusting to life once released. These three antifascists were imprisoned for very different actions and faced very different circumstances and environments, and yet all three came out of prison determined to fight back against the carceral system until all are free.

FIRESTORM

AK PRESS

RATTLING THE CAGES

ORAL HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

"Until All Are Free!"

JASON HAMMOND | ERIC KING | JEREMY HAMMOND

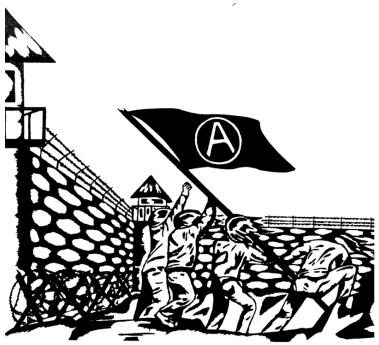
Originally hosted as a live conversation by Firestorm Books,
recording available on Firestorm's youtube channel:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhdGdIwVwtc
November 9, 2024

Published by AK Press, *Rattling the Cages: Oral Histories of North American Political Prisoners* is a project of abolitionists Josh Davidson and Eric King. The book is filled with the experience and wisdom of over thirty current and former North American political prisoners. It provides first-hand details of prison life and the political commitments that continue to lead prisoners into direct confrontation with state authorities and institutions.

Transcription, editing, and formatting by ev, Danielle, Josh, & Jeremy with help from Firestorm Books.

all labor volunteered

with whatever weapons at hand



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As you've heard & read, it is vital that we support the political prisoners of our liberation movements. Providing support builds bridges across and through prison bars, giving those locked inside a connection to the outside world. Your support matters.

Get involved. Write to a political prisoner—a simple letter provides a needed escape. Visit them in prison. Ask what a political prisoner needs and do what you can to help them. Offer them support.

Visit the NYC Anarchist Black Cross website (*nycabc.wordpress.com*) and learn more about those currently imprisoned for political reasons.

Buy a Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners calendar (*certaindays.org*).

Visit your local Books Through Bars group and send books to those incarcerated (*booksthroughbarsnyc.org/resources*).

Join your nearest Anarchist Black Cross group (*abcf.net*).

Visit *rattlingthecages.com* to learn more.

Rattling the Cages

1) Political Prisoners, Mass Incarceration, & Abolition
Eric King, Herman Bell, David Gilbert, Susan Rosenberg

2). Continuing the Struggle Inside & Out
Eric King, Ashanti Alston, Ray Luc Levasseur

3) Antifascism Behind Bars
Eric King and David Campbell

4) Black August & Prisoner Support
Eric King, dequi kioni-sadiki, Harold Taylor

5) Eric King in Conversation with James Kilgore
Eric King, James Kilgore

6) Post-Prison Activism & Archiving Resistance
Eric King, Jake Conroy, Claude Marks

7) Until All Are Free
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8) Revolutionary Women Behind Bars
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9) Becoming Politicized in Prison
Eric King, Josh Davidson, Hector Rodriguez, Farhan Ahmed

10) Rattling the Cages: How We Dit It & How You Can Too
Eric King, Sara Falconer, Josh Davidson

11) Abolition Is a Family Affair
Eric King, Sharon Shoatz, susie day, Rochell Bricker

12) Looking Back at the George Jackson Brigade
Mark Cook, Janine Bertram, Eric King

all conversations are available @FirestormCoop on youtube

Jason Hammond is an antifascist anarchist from Chicago who participated in Anti-Racist Action and other movements towards liberation and abolition. In 2012, Jason was arrested along with the Tinley Park 5 after a militant action against a white supremacist conference. He spent 14 months in a southern Illinois prison, and upon release, doubled down on prisoner support and other modes of solidarity with movements resisting the fascist state. Jason is also co-host of the Twin Trouble podcast as well as co-developer of the riot & rally indie game SmashMAGA! along with his brother Jeremy.

Jeremy Hammond is an activist from Chicago, founder of the computer security training website HackThisSite, and former political prisoner connected to Anonymous. Arrested numerous times for his civil disobedience, Jeremy has served two prison sentences for his activism: one in connection with a hack of the pro-war Protest Warrior website in 2005 (for which he served almost two years), and again in 2013, for hacking the private intelligence firm Stratfor and releasing data to WikiLeaks (he spent over nine years imprisoned on this second case). In 2019, while still in prison, Jeremy refused to cooperate with a federal grand jury investigating WikiLeaks and its founder Julian Assange, and was held in civil contempt of court. He was released from prison in November 2020. His sentencing statement is included in the book *Defiance: Anarchist Statements Before Judge and Jury* (2019).

Eric King is a father, poet, author, and activist. Last December, he was released from the supermax ADX prison after spending nearly ten years as a political prisoner for an act of protest over the police murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. He was held in solitary confinement for years and was met with violence by guards throughout his incarceration. Eric has published three zines: *Battle Tested* (2015), *Antifa in Prison* (2019), and *Pacing in My Cell* (2019). His sentencing statement is included in the book *Defiance: Anarchist Statements Before Judge and Jury* (2019). Eric now works as a paralegal for the Bread and Roses Legal Center.

Libertie Valance: All right y'all, let's get started. My name is Libertie and I'm a member of the Firestorm Collective. Tonight we're excited to host former political prisoners Eric King and Jason and Jeremy Hammond, and they're going to be discussing state versus federal prisons solidarity inside and out and readjusting to life once released.

Firestorm is a 16-year-old radical bookstore owned and operated by a queer feminist collective in southern Appalachia on the land of the Cherokee people, and we strive to feature events and books that reflect our interests and the needs of marginalized communities in the South. We're also continuing to book virtual events both because we love being able to connect with folks at a distance and because we know that there's a lot of barriers to folks in our local community to attending things in person right now.

Eric King: Hi friends! Jeremy and Jason, I'm excited talk to both of you. I've met Jeremy before, but Jason we never met, so this is really exciting. I feel close to both of you even though I only met 50% of you!

Jason Hammond: It's pretty much the same.

Eric King: Let's get started. Jeremy, you did two bids.

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, plus a couple county weeks here and there. But I did two federal bids. My first one I was at Greenville for a two-year bid. I was like 19 for hacking. Yeah, one count.

Eric King: Were you shocked you didn't get sent to the CMU the second time?

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, good question.

Eric King: I was. I was shocked you didn't.

Jeremy Hammond: Oh my God, yeah. The CMU being one of the two federal prisons that are the Communications Management Units, where you're only allowed like one letter a month, one phone call a month, or something along those lines. Heavily monitored, heavily scrutinized. They normally go after Muslim prisoners or environmentalists, or even like complex fraud cases - oh yeah, there's plenty of those in the feds who are

Write to Political Prisoners mentioned in this conversation

for a monthly updated list of political prisoners & their addresses visit

nycabc.wordpress.com

Finally, the BOP introduced the MP3 program: you can buy a cheap-ass dollar store MP3 player specially manufactured by SanDisk and use an iTunes-like music store built into the same email terminals. Many recreation departments have also been playing newly released rented DVDs from Netflix (PG-13) and streaming satellite radio stations (paid for our "trust fund" money skimmed off the top of the already skimmed commissary profits).

I wasn't able to use any of this in NYC when they rolled it out because they put me on restriction, worried I'd hack the planet or steal MP3s. I was also put on commissary restriction for a year and loss of visits for two years for dropping dirty on a drug test. But after being sentenced and arriving here in Kentucky, they enabled it and I was able to buy an MP3 and use email (though incoming/outgoing messages are delayed by days).

The music selection itself is something like iTunes: mainstream signed bands, no explicit lyrics. I was unable to determine what kind of relationship they have with the record companies to provide the music, so here's some samples to give you an idea of what they got:

They do have: Against Me!, Against All Authority, NOFX, Green Day, Buzzcocks, Bad Religion, Germs, Cramps, Anti-Flag, Rise Against, Ramones, Refused, Sleater Kinney, Bad Brains, Leftöver Crack.

They do not have: Crass, Conflict, Bikini Kill, Dead Kennedys, Minor Threat, Fugazi, World Inferno Friendship Society, Minutemen, Subhumans, Aus Rotten, MDC, Dystopia.

Definitely do not have: any bands mentioned in *MRR*.

I always try to shell out some bucks for a local or touring band, but I am an old school pirate, downloading music from FTP and IRC Fserves before there was Napster. It is insulting to have to pay $1.50 a song for some Walmart BS when they only pay us $5 a month here, not even enough for a whole album, when on the streets you can freely download the entire Tupac discography on BitTorrent in less than an hour. I don't buy a whole lot of songs and instead generally listen to the maximum number of free 30-second samples every day, but I had to cop out and buy a few tracks when they added Operation Ivy last month.

from Jeremy Hammond's column in Maximum Rocknroll 382 (2015 Mar)

still doing stuff from the inside, good for them. No, they did threaten to send me to the CMU once. One time I was sent to the hole for like a month or two. One of my comrades was running a Twitter account on my behalf and during the Ferguson Uprising someone had... Remember the Dallas shooter who had also shot...

Eric King: I have that date tattooed on my hand! July 7, 2016.

Jeremy Hammond: It's a day to remember! They put the time in, man. Good for them. They roboted their ass, though. That was kind of sad. But, yeah, so I had someone put a Tweet out on my behalf saying it's about time that those cops started getting a taste of their own medicine. It's tit for tat. Support the Dallas shooter. So yeah, I was in the hole for a month and all that and they said, "You're going to the CMU" and all that. But they never did. They never did, honestly. I was in mediums for most of my bid, with just the general amount of repression that people do experience.

Eric King: We'll get to that. We're gonna dive in. I want to start with letting people know how both of you got into activism, individually, collectively, whatever. What got you into activism, and then what led you to do what got you put in prison? So it's like a two-part question. Jason, I don't think I've ever heard you speak, so you're up first.

Jason Hammond: I got you. Both me and Jeremy were politicized in high school, after 9/11, following the military adventurism of the US in Iraq and Afghanistan. There was a lot of increased Islamophobia and racism, and it was kind of a turning point, like a "Which side are you on?" type situation for us. We were observing these things. And there was a Student Liberation Collective that a lot of students organized and did a walk-out in our high school and many others in Illinois, Chicago, suburban networks. So, yeah, the anti-war movement is how we came into politics. From there we basically were trying to participate as much as possible. Then Occupy happened, of course, and during these times we're trying to cut our teeth, learning from a lot from different places. You know, Jeremy at one point was more of a a summit-hopper type, going to the RNC and getting arrested protesting there. But we were both getting arrested here and there in scrappies, protests. Some kind of non-violent direct action types, or sometimes cops just kind of arrest people randomly—even if you don't want to, you're always a potential target for repression if you stand up for people's rights and against imperialism.

We were learning a lot of things that we're still seeing parallels with, like people resisting the genocidal war in Gaza right now with people rising up, doing encampments at colleges and building occupations. That's an interesting escalation, too, like people were learning a little bit, maybe. We were reading things like *The Failure of Nonviolence* and *How Nonviolence Protects the State* by Peter Gelderloos, so we were trying to experiment with various ways during this time and various other ways of resisting. We both joined Anti Racist Action, which is a more specific series of actions and strategies and tactics that were I guess for many a little bit more arrestable and facing repression, Jeremy had already done some prison time so we were already interested in abolitionist struggles and all that.

We see a lot of the same parallels with peace policing, like the DNC, for example, or different dynamics with more liberalizing tendencies within student protests and encampments and all of that. So there's these sort of things that we're trying to get a hold of and learn from, like maybe 10 to 15 years ago during the anti-war movements of that era versus now is still being played out.

And, of course, we're still participating in these roles even after, in these protests, as much as our capacity, which we will talk about more with what we're doing afterwards, of course, later. But that's how we basically got involved anti-war, antiracism, smashing the fash, and trying to understand and dismantle systemic racism and sexism.

Eric King: Jeremy, got anything to add?

Jeremy Hammond: Like Jason said, the Bush years, I guess now by comparison sometimes people say seem like more of an innocent time, but for us it was like we were having to unlearn a lot of things we learned about America. Just going to anti-war marches and stuff like that and basically seeing the powers that be, just like speaking truth to power, isn't enough. So when we started getting involved in the anti-war movement we started seeing other struggles, how it's all connected, how it is ultimately an issue of the state and capitalism as a whole, and how issues like police brutality and imperialism are related. Especially when you think about how Chicago police do train with Israel and all that. We just thought that more was necessary to stop the machinery of war. Holding a picket sign is cool stuff, but sometimes you have to play with a full deck.

would be on hiatus in December 2024. The website remains an archive of anarchist and autonomous history and struggle. For more information: itsgoingdown.org/about/

Fight Toxic Prisons — The Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons (FTP) mission is to conduct grassroots organizing, advocacy, and direct action at the intersection of incarceration, health, and ecology. We aim to directly challenge the prison system, which is putting prisoners at risk of dangerous environmental conditions, as well as impacting surrounding communities and ecosystems by their construction and operation. FTP often leads campaigns to support prisoners through environmental disasters. *For more information:* fighttoxicprisons.wordpress.com/about/

protest camp in Seattle during the 2020 George Floyd Uprisings. The formation of CHAZ was preceded by a week of tense confrontations and battles between the police and protestors near the SPD's East Precinct, which the police ultimately abandoned. Protestors were able to hold the space from June 8 to July 1, 2020, when SPD with help from the FBI cleared the camp arresting dozens of people. The space offered free food, support and supplies for houseless people, community gardens, and consensus decision making. Many radical critics of CHAZ noted, however, failings of the commune, as protestors did not seize the abandoned precinct, like was done in Minneapolis, and internal security replicated dangerous hierarchies, with a 16 year old Black youth left dead in a shooting at the commune's borders.

Jailhouse Lawyers Speak — the largest prisoner-led organization fighting for prisoners' human rights and dignity in the United States. Notorious for their work towards abolition, Jailhouse Lawyers Speak has a distinguished history of organizing and participating in major events [2017 Historical Millions for Prisoners Human Rights March, 2018 Nationwide Prison Strike, 2021 Shut 'em Down Demonstrations] with members across the country for better conditions within US prisons and legal educational opportunities for US prisoners. Their relentless efforts to provide law books, courses and literature aids prisoners to educate themselves and encourages them to help teach and liberate other prisoners. Jailhouse Lawyers Speak welcomes new members in both men's and women's prisons in the US. New and ongoing community-based projects led by the inside that connect inside and outside organizers will struggle forward in the spirit of abolition as JLS continues to build resistance. *For more information:* www.jailhouselawyersspeak.com/

Bash Back! — a network of queer, insurrectionary anarchist cells active in the United States. Formed in Chicago in 2007 to facilitate a convergence of radical trans and gay activists from around the country, Bash Back! sought to critique the ideology of the mainstream LGBTQ movement, which the group saw as assimilation into the dominant institutions of a heteronormative society. Bash Back! was noticeably influenced by the anarchist movement and radical queer groups, such as ACT UP, and took inspiration from the Stonewall and San Francisco's White Night riots.

Running Down the Walls — Since 1999, prisoners and supporters throughout North America have participated in the annual event known as Running Down the Walls (RDTW), a non-competitive 5K run/jog/walk/roll to raise awareness and funds for political prisoners. Over the years, RDTW has raised thousands of dollars and lots of awareness around the struggle to free political prisoners.

Its Going Down — a digital community center and media platform featuring news, opinion, podcasts, and reporting on autonomous movements across so-called North America from an anarchist perspective. IGD announced the project

Sometimes you have to take things to the next level. Honestly, being comfortable and law-abiding in this sick genocidal society is complicity with it. When you realize that the laws are there to keep the people in power in power, so in order to disrupt this balance there's no means forward by picketing or writing your congressman, you've got to take direct action. So that's when we decided to get involved in direct action and militant formations.

Eric King: Jason, what happened that got you sent to prison?

Jason Hammond: The specific thing that got me sent to prison was just one specific tactic of groups like Anti Racist Action, which was the infiltrating of a group called Illinois European Heritage Association. Fuck these assholes, I'm glad to say one of them is dead, at least that I know about - not directly a result of this specifically! - but who is to say? So there was an infiltration in this group, they're essentially Nazis. It was actually during the NATO protests in Chicago in 2012. They had an alternative, like a European economic summit, forum. It was basically like a meeting, like a banquet hall at a restaurant. So basically we had infiltrated their networks with a sock account and building fake rapport with these fascists. We got the deets on when and where, which is very interesting and fun to do, if you're into it. That's a fun thing that I encourage people to get into. Then we found out where the location was, and we basically went in and did the deed. I myself got arrested like a year later after an investigation. Some folks in Tinley Park Five, later six with myself, they were arrested basically after the event, driving away. They have all done their time. Many of them, three to six years in Illinois prisons, and I was writing to them actually (under a pseudonym, of course) before the feds worked with the Tinley Park Police and coordinated an anti-terrorism task force that basically provided some intel that helped identify myself in these videos. There was also DNA, I guess. Whatever. But anyway, we beat up some Nazis and eventually dragged out the trial as long as I could, until—well, they really had me on the DNA, and so I took the plea, non-cooperating, and then really did the time. They say I was guilty, and I guess they're right. I was guilty of beating up a Nazi.

Eric King: Were weapons involved?

Jason Hammond: You know, I mean, the thing is, there's plenty of

improvisation that can work toward our favor. I mean, a chair leg is like that; it may not immediately be assumed to be a weapon. I'm not sure. There's been plenty of cases and trials where this particular defense might have been used, like with the intent, I was just carrying a chair leg, you know?

Jeremy Hammond: But it was armed assault though, to be clear.

Jason Hammond: Yeah, it was armed violence. They did get me on that.

Eric King: Did you all... these are impromptu questions that are popping up. Did you all know that this was going to be a conflict and train for that, like mixed martial arts, boxing, weapons, or was it, "Let's just go see what these punks are up to and give them some work?"

Jason Hammond: Well, I mean, ARA does other things, too, but, yes, trying to physically handle Nazis is one well-known aspect of ARA. But in doing community self-defense, there's plenty of other reasons to train in mixed martial arts, or any kind of martial arts in various ways for self-defense. Especially for queer and trans communities, people of color communities, these are very important things in these times, and it was then, too. So these are also community building, this is something that the group could do to be with me as well as pursue our own campaigns against fascists in the area. So it's a good way to just build bonds and connection using the tactics. Whether or not you use the self-defense, it's important for everybody.

Eric King: We protect us. Okay, Big Jeremy, talk to me friend. Tell me about your second bid. That's the one that I want to focus on. What got you there?

Jeremy Hammond: When I got out the first time I was on paper, obviously, supervised release, and I was wanting to be involved and stuff but obviously not really sure the degree of surveillance and what, whether I should jump in on like direct action stuff like that again, and so I dabbled in a few different things, different activist campaigns and stuff like that. And then Anonymous actually was kicking off right around Occupy time anyways, and I just saw that it had a lot of potential, that they were like almost by accident sometimes getting into some really really big targets, and they wanted to make it political. And they were a little bit rough on

People, Places, Events, & Organizations

July 7, 2016 — Micah Xavier Johnson ambushed and shot police officers in Dallas, Texas, killing five, injuring nine others, and wounding two civilians. Johnson, a 25-year-old Army Reserve Afghan War veteran, was angry over white police shootings of black men. He shot the officers at the end of a protest against the recent killings by police of Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, Minnesota.

RNC protests — thousands of people gathered in Saint Paul, Minnesota in 2008 to protest the Republican National Convention and problems associated with it such as the US war in Iraq, homelessness, poverty, and other issues. A significant black bloc materialized for the protests, and there were major clashes with the police. Over the three days of the convention, police arrested nearly 300 people, with around half of them receiving felonies. 21 felonies were ultimately prosecuted. A legal support campaign emerged to support the RNC 8, anarchist organizers who were arrested on no-knock warrants before the protests occurred via police infiltration and whom the state attempted to charge with domestic terrorism.

Peter Gelderloos — an anarchist theorist and activist who is most known for works such as *How Nonviolence Protects the State*, *The Solutions are Already Here: Strategies for Ecological Revolution from Below*, *Anarchy Works*, *The Failure of Non-Violence*, and *Worshiping Power: An Anarchist View of Early State Formation*.

Anti-Racist Action (ARA) — a decentralized network of anti-fascists and other leftist militants that engaged in direct action to physically combat fascists through direct action. ARA originally came out of the efforts of Minneapolis anti-racist Skinheads in the hardcore punk scene to create an organization that could combat the presence of nazi skinheads. By 1992, the network had expanded beyond its original subcultural base in the skinhead scene to include also students, workers, anarchist punks and older left-wing activists. ARA built up connections to black power groups in places like Chicago, and integrated aspects of third-wave feminism and, as part of this, defended abortion clinics against fundamentalist attacks. The network grew and spread throughout North America. The midwest, particularly Minneapolis, Chicago and Columbus, were the main hotspot for activity, but notable chapters existed in Portland, Los Angeles, Toronto and elsewhere.

Torch Network — a decentralized network of anti-fascists that formed out of Anti-Racist Action (ARA) to combat fascists through direct action and to disrupt and deny space for fascists to organize.

CHAZ — **Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone** — an autonomous zone / commune /

Libertie Valance: This been awesome. I really appreciating the clarity that y'all brought to this conversation. I'm hoping that everybody's going to join us on November 23rd for the next conversation in this series. Big thanks to you Eric and also Josh for putting this book together and making the series happen. It's just been amazing. Thank you so much!

Jason Hammond: Yeah, have a great night, y'all.

Jeremy Hammond: Yes, see you later, much respects solidarity, y'all.

the edges, but I really did appreciate their internet sensibilities and their subversive use of humor as a way to embarrass those in power. But I was like—let's work, let's get it right, you know, let's do some damage and stuff like that beyond superficial defacing and stuff like that.

So, when I was snooping around, the first thing I jumped in on Anonymous was a hack, I just saw a lot of the "papers please" SB1070 stuff was in the news, and I was looking at Arizona police and I found a vulnerability in the Arizona Police Fraternal Order of Police website and it had a roster of all numbers and their passwords and stuff like that. I was, "Yeah, okay so that's illegal." I'm already in that territory, but I could walk away, close it, I could cover my tracks, but I was thinking to myself, "How many millions of people would have loved the chance to fuck these people over, but they don't have the same opportunity that I had at that particular moment, because I had those type of skills?" Man, people want to get back, people would love to see get back, and so I felt like I didn't even have a choice in this matter, that it was just the right time for the moment. And so that was my first contribution to Anonymous. Then I definitely for the next nine months or so did a combination of things like direct action, hacking, revealing emails and passwords, and defacing and deleting their servers, and stuff like that. Basically sabotage. But also inserting a more explicitly anti-authoritarian politic into Anonymous. You know, Anonymous is not a political group, per se, with points of unity and stuff like that, but we were definitely going after the police, we were definitely going after military, and also computer security contractors who work with the police. And fascists. We went after a lot of Nazis as well. Same thing, really, right?

I knew when I decided to do it again that I'm not going to get a slap on the wrist like a 19-year-old this time around, even though generally the computer security laws are written for the sons and daughters of congress people, white people. It's a fraud type of sentencing guidelines structure. They did max me, though, the second time. But I just knew that, yeah, I was going to be looking at time. But I was like, you know, it's like, "Die on your feet or live on your knees," man. Like, shit's got to change. It's the time, like we talked about. I'm not saying I'm going to start some fires, but it's time. I would like to see some fires started.

Eric King: God bless you. Jason, you did 20 months, or how long did you do?

Jason Hammond: It ended up being 14 months. It was a three and a half year sentence.

Eric King: Was that in a prison or did they keep you stuck in the jail?

Jason Hammond: I was actually bonded out. I did about maybe two months in Cook County Jail, and I did about another 14 months in southern Illinois, Vandalia, or "Klandalia" as it's called, because it historically has many white guards.

Eric King: Because of the obvious reasons.

Jason Hammond: Even though it's like, of course, they say Illinois is Northern State, it would be like every week a big truck would drive by with a giant Confederate flag, just driving right in front of the damn thing, in front of you, the whole yard, and the whole prison like they're trying to make it known.

Jeremy Hammond: Probably one of the guards ...

Eric King: Then Jeremy, how much time and where did you do your time?

Jeremy Hammond: Alright, so the second bid I was at MCC Chicago for the first two weeks then transferred to New York, MCC New York, and also MDC Brooklyn. I was there for about a year and a half to 20 months or something like that pre-trial until I was sentenced, then I'm skipping Oklahoma and Grady and all that because [they are transfer prisons where he did not spend a great deal of time.] Let's see, I was at Manchester for four years, then I actually made it to a low, Milan in Michigan, for about a year. Then I was sent to Memphis, a federal medium, back again. Got a bogus assault case, and then, oh yeah, that's right, the contempt hearing. I thought I was going to get out, three months to the door, then they subpoenaed me, wanted to hold me in contempt, and so that began. The next year and a half or so I was at Alexandria Detention Center outside of DC, which is where the eastern district of Virginia was holding its WikiLeaks [hearings].

Eric King: I heard you were the cook there.

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah. Well, you know, they starve you to death,

Eric King: Just letting you both know, my one year is December 12. On December 14, me and my wife are having a free wedding, because we got married inside, so we're doing our free ceremony, and then also a celebration party because we're free. You're both invited!

I'm just gonna take this time to shout out Randy Platt "Smiles." He is at ADX still. He will be there for the next 14 years. He is there for slicing a cop who abused him relentlessly in the SHU. He sliced him through a bean slot. Yeah, got his bitch ass at USB Florence. He is gonna be there, and we are his support. His support is strangers, it's me, it's Jeremy, it's Jason, it's all the people that write him, so I encourage everyone to please write Randy, or to write anyone, write a prisoner. It can change their life. It can make someone's life go from hell to beauty so quick.

How do people get a hold of you, or what do you recommend people do? What's your final sign off message?

Jason Hammond: Keep organizing, keep agitating, keep escalating. Keep supporting those that do—not everyone needs to do everything, right, we need a lot of different people to do a lot of different types of things. Find a niche where you feel good, where you're effective, and keep those who are working and swimming the same direction in your hearts, and keep a lookout for those who are doing everything they can and who have fallen through cracks of the system, and like you said, write prisoners.

Jeremy Hammond: You said 14 years, but I don't think that future is a guarantee. Like it's hard to even imagine another election in four years, that it's going to be at all the same. We also know that there's folks inside who are going to be there, so they say forever unless something changes, unless the system is overthrown. It's on all of us who are out here: our freedom is actually a privilege and a responsibility. Me and you are some of the lucky ones to get out, and like you said, your comrades inside, they're waiting for us out here to do the right thing, so let's get out there and do it.

Eric King: I love you both.

Jason & Jeremy Hammond: Love you, too!

Eric King: Libertie, I appreciate you, friend. Sign us out.

support everybody, there's enough resources. Before we go, there's been some sad moments and some happy moments in this talk, and I'd like to know what gives you guys hope right now. What makes you smile, what makes you most happy, whether it's in the movement outside or both? What makes my two friends happy?

Jeremy Hammond: Well, it's a fucked up world, society, right, but I want to say that we do count our small wins when we got them. I'll maybe tell a story when I was a prison and now too. In prison, you might be in the hole 24 hours a day, you're fucking banging on the doors and nothing, right? But you know what makes you happy—the small wins, when you might be flooding the deck with everybody else, and you might see the cop slip and fall and fucking get wet and you will be laughing about that shit for months. Yeah, you're still in a hole and stuff like that, but it fucking felt good watching that happen. And the same now, you see people on the world fucking strike out and get some get back, and even though we might not have the upper hand overall right now, but take joy and pride in those little moments that we do have our wins.

Eric King: Absolutely. Jason?

Jason Hammond: I'm thinking it's the solidarity, because it's easy to be alienated in this shit society right. But a lot more people give a fuck about the well-being of others than maybe we might know about, because it's not like everywhere, like it's set up to where we shouldn't, right? You drive your car to your job, go back you're fucking trad fam or whatever the hell. And it's alienating, but we're seeing more genuine acts of solidarity, and more people willing to take chances to change it. I think that is a beautiful thing that keeps moving, and like a lot of people who have given in—or I won't say given it but who just experienced despair and alienation and all that—they could be part of movements of solidarity, and I think that is one of the things seeing and witnessing and participating in it gives meaning and gives you hope. I think that's one of the reasons why I haven't given into pessimism or misanthropy that doesn't lead to a change in society because I do believe that like we are going to need to give a fuck about each other. There's that article, "I've lost ways of trying to teach other people to give a fuck about other people…" We gotta keep finding new ways to get people to give a fuck about each other, because then we do give into a fascist nightmare.

especially in the county jails. I mean, I lost a lot of weight, especially the last two years my sentence, because, you know, you spend a lot of time in the yard when you're pushing weight, and you're eating as much as you can. Then the last two years they dogged my ass, man. I was in solitary for most of it and eating county jail food, one hot meal a day type of thing, but I did manage to weasel my way into the kitchen. So I was cooking for about 500 people for six months. I worked all types of jobs, like maybe you would have if they didn't dog your ass in solitary. [*Laughter all around.*] But, yes, I worked in the kitchen. Hey, it's how you eat, and I was eating good, off the guards trays sometimes.

Eric King: I love hearing that! So, this is a unique opportunity for us, because we have two people that were in two different types of prison, but both in prison. It might be old for you guys to talk about the differences, but I find this wildly interesting. I like to talk about the race dynamics, the rec opportunities, the lockdowns. I want to know the difference between state prison and federal prison, as you guys experienced it. So, whoever wants to go first, just go first, but I want to hear all of it.

Jeremy Hammond: I'll go first with the racial dynamics. I mean, you've been in the fed, so you already know that it's an extremely racially segregated, extremely cliqued-up type of environment.

Eric King: So, in Midwest prisons and in the prisons you were at, Manchester, and maybe not Milan, but Greenville, those were still race-based?

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, very much so. Who you could cell with and stuff like that, but, of course, that's not actually true. You could be a race traitor. You know what I mean. You don't have to go with the flow. And, honestly, it's the type of thing where the fight doesn't end after you're arrested, or after you're in jail. The courts, that's the place you fight, and then when you're in the yard, that's another fight. Dismantling systemic racism. The Midwest is like that, but I was fortunate that I was able to meet up with a bunch of folks from Chicago, and at some places it was the Midwest car and some places it was just like the Chicago car. I'm not a gang member, but they're cool, they took me in so to speak. With the white boys, obviously, they're not into that at all, the way I was living, who you sit with, who you eat with, who you cell with.

Eric King: Did you eat with Black folks?

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah.

Eric King: Wow! Good for you, bro.

Jeremy Hammond: Well, I mean, again, I was kind of lucky honestly, because I had a big high-profile case, and I'm not a rat or a sex offender, so that already puts me below the hierarchy. Maybe it would have been different in maximum security prisons, like the penitentiaries are much more vicious I'm told, and possibly even West Coast ones are much more vicious. But I never had to fight for that in the same way that you had to, with my fists, so to speak. But I've got a big mouth, but mainly it's because people do recognize, you know, that I was standing up for something, and honestly the white boys couldn't say shit, because I showed them my paperwork, too. Once in a while, I actually did sit with them, and they're mad, right, because like I fuck with everybody, I was sitting with everybody, but they couldn't say shit because I'm legit. But I did have a few problems. Actually, many problems involving that when you stand up against it and go against the grain.

Eric King: I'm so impressed you did that. That's awesome.

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, again, I was lucky. I'm from Chicago and people knew my stuff.

Eric King: How many GDs were on those yards?

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, there's a lot. I mean, Manchester was a lot of people from Chicago, which was like 495 miles away, right, they put everybody from Chicago there, right, because it's just under the 500 miles. Milan is too. Memphis is also very St. Louis and Chicago, who sometimes ride together, if that makes any sense, the non-gang affiliated will ride together as a Midwest car sometimes. Ultimately, it's about the old convict code, too—your word and your principles and so—really, it's like you ain't got shit except your principles, so you have to walk in a way that matches, and that means everything to you, much more than a fucking tray, you know?

Eric King: I love this guy! Jason, tell me about your custody level and then, is, the state is going to more and more resemble a military police state, the erosion of social services, and it's a future for all of us, even those of us who are out here in minimum security are going to see more carceral type controls, everything from facial recognition to credit scores and all this shit. So our work is necessarily to stop the construction of Letcher County Prison, the BOP trying to build a new prison.

Eric King: Fight Toxic Prisons?

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, Fight Toxic Prisons, they're trying to build—they just voted I think last week, the BOP said, "Yeah, we actually do want that prison." Illinois is about to build a whole new billion dollar fucking prison system to replace Stateville, which is so old, so fucked up, so torturous that even the judge said, "Yeah, we got to get everybody out of there by next week." They're about to build a billion dollars and something prison, but there's obvious solutions here. Let people fucking go. Back to your original question, I kind of think all people who are behind bars in this country are political, like politics permeate, white supremacy permeates through every aspect of that court. You think it's a fair shot when you get up there and see that judge or that jury, or those who made those laws. I think about all the folks who are locked up who might not even been political in the sense that they got arrested for breaking a window or something like that, but their whole lives might have been political. Or whatever they had to do, like Jason had said, just to make it in this capitalist dog-eat-dog world. You had to resort to criminality one time, now they put you in a box? And that's a future for all of us unless we stop it. I will also just say that while I do think maybe ABC's support of political prisoners might be a little bit narrow to our taste, because, you know, we support those folks too, but we support everybody and don't put anybody on pedestals and stuff like that. But I do think that it is absolutely essential that we have the backs of those who actually do get out there, our comrades who actually do put in the work struggling for self-determination and a better world. We got to look after these folks, and so that's why we do have formations like ABC and that's why we do look after political prisoners, for lack of a better word, maybe a different word is more appropriate.

Eric King: I look at the social media sites, and I'll see a group has 10,000 likes, and I think if each of you wrote one letter, you can make such a dent in that system, but also lift up so many people. There's enough, like we can

are going to get out, and then they're going to be part of society, and if we want to talk about changing and abolishing the carceral aspects of society, we have to treat all humans as if they were capable of liberation, and so for that reason every prisoner should be supported and everyone freed. Because if we say some people are deserving of respect, and others aren't, then okay, maybe you are a warden, like maybe a lot of people walking around the street are guards of an open-air prison society. Because the thing is, everyone in prison, the choices that maybe you could say have led them there, are logical reactions to living in a society that has deprived people of the meaningful resources of ways of living. Like, "I got laid off so I had to do this scam, and now I got caught and I'm in prison." That could be anyone. It could be you. Just because it hasn't happened to you doesn't make you better than the people who it did happen to, and it might happen to you next month. Maybe not for everybody, of course, if you look at prisons, the large majority is people of color, so plenty people walk around with privileges and maybe not thinking of themselves like it's even possible for it to happen to, like white folk I'm talking about. But the prison system is of course expanding, and it will take you in because you fucking got caught up in the same shit too.

Eric King: I want to point out to people that the stock prices of Core Civic rose like 80%, and that's not on accident, it's because they know that those joints are about to be packed.

Jason Hammond: They're talking about the money involved—I'm not talking about the money, first off—they're going to prison before you try to deport a million people because of due process and all that. That is an unfathomable monstrosity that must be challenged at every fucking level by every single member of society. Then the cost of it, you're talking about numbers that most people don't even talk about, trillions of dollars to do this massive... And then, the thing is, once they build these prisons, they're fucking there, and they're going to continue using them. Let's say they do some fucking fascist nightmare stuff in the next few years, right, but then the next 10 years that prison's still there, and they're going to have every excuse to fill these beds and keep making money. So what happened in the last few days is an extreme acceleration of the Prison Industrial Complex on a level that we haven't seen I think.

Jeremy Hammond: And like J was saying, the expansion of these cop cities and these prisons and stuff like that—they know what the future actually

we're starting with racial relations, so what the racial dynamics or politics were like in the state joint you were at?

Jason Hammond: Alright, so Vandalia is a minimum in southern Illinois. They had a work camp where I ended up for a little bit of the time, or actually more than half the time, because one of my charges. Your first bid you're allowed to do some of the classes, like the building trades and horticulture, which were the few and some of the better opportunities that you could possibly even get there. It takes about six months to get into these things anyway. But it was a minimum, there was a fence all the way around. People said that there was a time where there wasn't one, but...

Eric King: Is that the equivalent of a camp, basically, in the feds?

Jason Hammond: I've read many camps don't have fences, but this, yeah. There was a Work Camp that was slightly better privileged, like there people were dormed in rooms of 20 in a 100 pod, as opposed to everywhere else where the dorms are like 100 in a dorm. But, yeah, it's probably similar to a camp, I might imagine. I can't say. I've never been to a camp, but it was still a minimum. And then just being Illinois, basically down state or anywhere south of Highway 80 is a very rural, huge majority white kind of population generally, as opposed to Chicagoland area, which is a lot more diverse. But you look at the prisons are largely majority, of course, people of color, and so this was a huge dynamic. Even though there were people from all over Illinois in the prison I was at—locals from like Centralia, or wherever, but the large majority of people are from Cook County, or like the Chicagoland area, so that dynamic played out.

Also, being a minimum, people weren't as hardcore about eating in racial cliques or gang cliques, even though there was definitely gang cliques where people were organizing themselves. And, of course, it's super racist—there's an expectation you're going to hang with your own, of course, and you've got to buck that every chance you get. I hung out with people I knew from Chicago, and people that I knew were from Chicago talking about familiar places and all of that. I got checked a fewer times by some folks, but I'm just like, "I don't really see why you're being so fucking racist about this shit." Of course, with my charge I'm like, "Oh my God, am I going to run into a bunch of fucking Nazis who are going to ask about my

goddamn charge?" But still, even though there were definitely a few folks who had fucking swazis on their goddamn bods, they actually kept their mouths pretty quiet, generally, because I don't think that they really had that much pull in Vandalia maybe. Or it might also just be because it's a minimum place, so that means everyone there was five years or less. I think a lot of people there are just trying to get out as quick as possible without trying to rile some more stuff, they don't really feel like...

Eric King: I think they saw those big ass knuckles you have. Look at those things! No wonder they kept their mouth shut?

Jason Hammond: Yeah, I'm like, "what about it, racists?"

Eric King: So, Jason, what was the food situation like?

Jason Hammond: Well, they definitely had provided meals three times a day, hot meals—actually I wouldn't say breakfast was really provided, it was sometimes just bread and peanut butter jelly and an egg, a boiled egg. So at least two, maybe three hots a day, but it was garbage, right, it wasn't —well it was definitely a step up from Cook County Jail, which is—County Jail's not unique, but it's some of the worst food that you can force someone to eat.

Eric King: Honestly, between the two of you, you dudes were at like the three worst pre-trial facilities on Earth. Those things are rough, the MDCs and then Cook!

Jason Hammond: Terrible. Cook County is like the largest, one of the largest maybe by land, but it's also notorious for being particularly bad, I think between Rikers and...

Eric King: Particularly bad, yes that is what it's known for.

Jeremy Hammond: I've been in that motherfucker like eight times, man, everything from—my God man, and it's actually better than it used to be. It used to be like twice as crowded and guards are just so vicious and people are still dying there all the time, and they're covering it up. No medical care. No books either, there's no library, there's no law library. It's one of the worst ones, and you know we do a lot of prisoner support, and we're looking at some of these inmate numbers like, "Damn, this

to see something like a protest and a celebration. So we do the noise generator stuff... What else we got? The prison censorship stuff.

Jeremy Hammond: I mean, yeah, the prison support, solidarity stuff, we got ABC out here, we got Books to Prisoners out here, like you said the It's Going Down zines is one of our mainstays, we send this to all the political prisoners and there's several hundred other people on the mailing list.

Eric King: Shout out to It's Going Down.

Jeremy Hammond: So people can get a subscription to It's Going Down, or any other publication or social media feed. We're basically trying to build those networks of folks inside-outside, because you know folks are coming out one day, folks who got nothing to lose and everything to gain from the overthrow of the system. You've seen it. We got millions out there, fucking ready, you know. How are we going to do this?

Eric King: Our panel next month is all about politicized prisoners. You both, and I really respected it, like the person I rep the most is not a political prisoner, it's just my friend, who has nobody...

Jeremy Hammond: Randy Platt?

Eric King: Yeah! We did a concert for him, a benefit show, and raised $800.

Jeremy Hammond: Woah! Cool!

Jason Hammond: Nice!

Eric King: Talk about why it's important. We don't have that much time left, but please talk about why it's important to support all prisoners, instead of just this upper class of political prisoners, either of you.

Jason Hammond: Well, essentially, the crux is that no one should be behind bars. It is a torturous vestigial remnant of the fucking slavery in the United States, and for those reasons alone we should support every single prisoner in the right for freedom. That's the first base. The second base, like Jeremy said, is that unless you're in there for life, and you deserve to fucking fight for your freedom and have a dignified life if you're fucking stuck there, but everyone's going to get out, a lot of people

thing I'll say is—just read cases, read dockets, read indictments, and stuff like that, and learn from the mistakes of other people that they've made before you choose to get involved in something, just so you're aware.

Eric King: Knowledge is key. Tell me, what's been on your mind recently, either what you've been doing, what you've been feeling, what you want to do. I just want to give you an open forum. Just talk.

Jeremy Hammond: Obviously Palestine, and Trump and this shit is like—we have a higher calling here, and we've got to give it everything we got. Stuff that happened recently, we were at the DNC, that was a whole bunch of bullshit. For me personally, like we do a lot of prison support, I've been into this digitization of mail and censorship stuff, but yeah, but we're out there, so...

Eric King: I need more!

Jason Hammond: We're gonna need to continue doing movement stuff, building power with other folks who are who are doing similar work, prison abolition, mutual aid. Anyone can get involved in these things and should! That is a way to build community and experiment in solidarity economy. We try to do some other cool things, like we do the Running Down The Walls, it's like our third year organizing that.

Eric King: You guys both organize it over there?

Jason Hammond: Oh, it's like our fourth year of Running Down The Walls, and we like to make it generator show, too. We're involved in bands, and there's a lot of good music in Chicago, so we love to bring music to prisoners.

Eric King: Did I see you all playing a show outside of a jail?

Jeremy Hammond: Mighta... Yeah, sounds like something we would...

Eric King: Oh, did I just snitch!? Did I see a band perform outside the jail!?

Jason Hammond: It's an open secret that we make music and we hate prisons. Noise demos, emphasis on noise. We like to create interventions in society that gets people to rethink. Like outside of a jail, no one expect motherfucker's been there for 10 years." Damn bag of bones type shit, man. They need to shut that thing down. And during the COVID pandemic, too, that was the number one COVID spot in the country actually.

Jason Hammond: There was a super spreader, like they traced maybe one quarter of all cases in Illinois came from Cook County, at least that's what the data said at the time, Cook County Jail was definitely a super spreader.

Eric King: I was being held for my second charge in the Englewood SHU when COVID hit. When it happened, they took away soap, and said they couldn't afford it anymore. So we didn't have soap, and then they said the commissary out of medicine, so we couldn't buy medicine and couldn't buy soap! You fucking pukes!

Jeremy, you were at mediums and lows. Those are sometimes known for better recreation and better food. Did you experience that? What was your rec situation like, did you have sports, did you have hobbies?

Jeremy Hammond: They're not often locked down as much, obviously, as some of the higher levels, or the supermax. But yeah, they're considered opens. The lows and mediums are considered open, where every hour they do a move and you have minutes to either go somewhere or back from somewhere, like rec. They often do rec at least like three times, morning, afternoon, and evening sometimes, unless there is a staff shortage or lightning or whatever. So you can walk in circles around the track.

During the summer they sometimes have sports and stuff like that, so I always tried to play softball every year that I could. I played a total of eight years of prison softball, so that's kind of cool. Once in a while I've been at one or two places that also have a music program, so I was able to fuck around. I actually learned guitar in prison my first bid, because my brother sent me guitar tabs and music theory, stuff like that. I was able to teach myself guitar by checking out a guitar with your ID, and you use it for a couple hours. That was awesome.

Eric King: I don't remember which one, but in like 2014 or 2015 one of you was in the ABC [Anarchist Black Cross] newsletter, and you were listing the bands that they had on the MP3 thing so other people would know.

Which one was that, do you remember, either of you?

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, I think I did an article for Maximum RockNRoll, maybe it was printed, and I was talking about the MP3 programs, and what songs I liked.

Eric King: That was helpful for me. I love that! I was just checking off the bands.

Jeremy Hammond: Oh yeah?! Oh, that's so cool. I'm so glad someone appreciated them. Yeah, I put a bunch of punk bands, I think, like Operation Ivy. Fuck, what else did I have on there?

Eric King: It was like just 15 punk bands.

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, and honestly from the Walmart music section, obviously they don't have any like DIY punk bands or anything like that, and it's all censored, and all that stuff, and you got to pay a buck fifty and all that shit. But man, you get your money's worth out that buck fifty, right, listening to that shit over and over and over again. I'm never listening to any of those songs ever again, never!

Eric King: I didn't have my MP3 the last several years obviously, but even when I finally got it back, I would not listen to a single one of those songs. No, you're dead to me.

Jeremy Hammond: You could take it home and unlock it for $15 dollars, but man, I'm fucking leaving that thing over there, so someone can turn it into a battery for the radio or something.

Eric King: Turn it into something. Jason, did you have access to music like that?

Jason Hammond: When I was in, it was the period between when they had tapes and radios, like Walkman's. Basically they had stopped doing that for a while, so they weren't even selling any radios or tapes because they were eventually going to do MP3 players. They started installing kiosks, which weren't finished by the time I was in there. So any radio you could even get was from someone who'd already been there for a while, and it was shared and protected by the folks and whoever they wanted to share

might think that that's a safe thing to do, to work for the NSA and stuff like that, but also because these foolios are clueless, incompetent, and they also have the keys to the kingdom—passwords to these systems in their Gmails and stuff. They don't know what they're doing, so we'll be more than happy to take that off your hands.

Eric King: Listening to you guys talk about technology is so interesting, so neat. I've got a thousand questions left, but I need to eventually just let you say what the hell you want to talk about. But just a question for me, before I let you guys take the mic. Jeremy, you got ratted on. You got ratted on hard. When you are now talking with people, either about technology or about anything else, does that stay with you, or have you been able to shake that and be like, "I can trust. I can lean into this". How has that affected you in terms of organizing?

Jeremy Hammond: It's a tough question, and it gets to the crux of it honestly, because I think everybody's actually wanting to do stuff, but wanting to do so in a way that keeps everybody safe. And then you see all these cases and stuff like that. I've always erred on the side of "Do shit and break shit and worry about the consequences later." I've actually not really been known for having the best security and stuff like that. Obviously. I've been caught a million times, right? But I don't have any regrets about that. I will say this, as far as the people who testified against me on this particular trial, they weren't my close comrades that I bid with every day that I've known for years in my life, so there wasn't a feeling of betrayal on this particular instance case that I may have had if it was my comrade who I've known my whole life had turned on me. This was just some fucking loudmouth on the internet, Sabu Hector Monsegur. There was a lot of flags there, he was an internet loudmouth who loved to brag about shit other people did, and all that stuff. But anyways, he testified, and it was like, "Go fucking figure." It was pretty obvious. As far as now—again, it's like with everything, there's layers of trust. There are some things that I'm willing to do at a demo with random people who I might just jump in at with at that particular moment if it seems right, because we're only talking about misdemeanor-level type stuff, for the most part. But, yeah, it's just layers of trust. You kind of want to build trust slowly, do things with people on regular stuff, and see how they react to situations and so forth, and then on it's need-to-know and compartmentalization all the way otherwise. But I don't do anything terribly crazy anymore, other than I keep up on the opsec stuff. The other

this, techies in especially in the United States and western countries are basically complicit with the industrialist nightmare, with the war machine—more or less have they decided that while they might have their own individual ethics and opinions, but when it comes to the paycheck, the cyber security industry, or developing facial recognition software, or crypto bullshit, and stuff like that—they bought in. You know, techies are very much on the privileged part of society, it's white collar jobs and offices making six figures and shit like that, the Peter Thiels of the world, the Elon Musks and the Zuckerbergs. When I got out the first time, especially, I was like, I actually don't see too much of a future in using technology to—and also a lot of these techies think that they discovered democracy, and they're going to develop some tech tool to be more democratic, or have discovered consensus decision-making and stuff like that, but people have been doing this without computers for so long. Honestly I think the most that hackers can really offer—besides hacking shit, which is what needs to get done, and it is happening, I'll talk to about in a second but—mostly though, I think hackers who have these type of skills should share op security skills to protect people who are at risk or vulnerable, especially entering this nightmarish Trump administration, how you secure your communications and protect your privacy and your comrades' privacy, and so forth. Other stuff, too. Maybe someone like me, I do websites for groups and stuff like that. Ultimately though, in the United States, it's kind of washed up—you go to a hacker con, half the people there trying to work for the NSA. But it's not always like that, there is an original hacker vision that is anti-authoritarian, that is criminally-minded, and I think if you leave the United States, you get you could see that a little bit more. Both of us, we actually had a chance to go to Germany to Chaos Camp, the hacker camp. Dude, that shit was so fucking banging, man. It really did give me hope, actually, that there was like fucking 15,000 hackers raving for seven days straight, all anarchist trans flags everywhere. Dude, it really did feel like this is actually the center of the universe type shit. So there is a hacker scene out there, but you know—don't like look to find it. It starts with you. I would also love to see more sabotage and more disruption, more doxing of police officers. And honestly, we gotta catch up, these fucking nightmarish Israelis and fucking drone warfare, and the United States military is recruiting all these hackers. I think this is one of the other things besides going after police and military. I went after other hackers who were fucking working for them, the White Hats, the sellouts, and stuff like that, because not only there needs to be repercussions and deterrence for future people who

it with. But I did share with someone, and it was like mostly '90s music. I would be listening to Green Day and Offspring. But the thing had been there for like 10 years, so it would be playing slower. I'd be trying to spin it to get it to go faster to just sound like the song. And the radio, of course, it's like Southern Illinois, in like middle nowhere. I don't want to say the middle nowhere, but they don't have an abundance of radio stations in the area.

Eric King: You couldn't get Chicago radio?

Jason Hammond: No, no. It would just be like Clear Channel, mainstream pop, or it would be country. And the mainstream pop stuff is like, I would be listening to other people listening to it at night, and I know all the melodies but none of the words. I'd hear the same song every goddamn night.

Eric King: Is that what got you involved in pop music to where you formed your boy band?

Jason Hammond: You know, I can hum the melody, but I don't know now any of the words!

Eric King: So, I want to talk about shit that goes on inside. You both touched on the racial element, and I want people to understand that every prison is different that way, and every one might not be as severe, but they all exist on this separation, where divide and conquer, one way or another, whether it's rats, tattle tails, racial shit, or staff repression. So, I don't know if either of you faced anything like that pre-trial, trial, or during your bid, but how was interactions with staff, either SIS or whatever the intelligence agency is there, with mail, with calls, just in general? What, if any, experiences did you have with staff?

Jeremy Hammond: I mean they were on my line quite a bit, especially the first couple years.

Eric King: By the way, Manchester is known for having really shitty guards.

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, it's Kentucky, man, the coal prison belt, Appalachia. Actually, there's a disproportionate amount of prisons over

there. It's a very insular community, mostly former military, who have no connection to the the people that are locked up, who are usually from urban areas. So, yeah, no, they were there on my line. I didn't have email or computer, and I had to add the phone manually for the first like year and a half. Then when I got to Manchester, I was on the email thing to where it would only send all my messages once a week and I'd receive all my messages once a week when the SIS clicks the button. And they were just on me for mail generally, like they were reading my stuff, and they gave me a couple shots here and there for various mail or phone infractions. Sometimes they would just take my shit for six months. I mean, I've been in the hole like, I don't know, a dozen times. I wrote a couple articles about it. I can't even remember all the individual circumstances. Sometimes it's stuff that like I knew I was doing it, I knew I could get caught, I made a lot of wine, right, I went to the hole for that. But other times it was stuff that was bullshit, you know what I mean, frankly.

Eric King: Like that shit that happened at Milan?

Jeremy Hammond: Oh yeah, the assault, the staff assault. Yeah, so Milan was one of the six federal prisons that had that Second Chance pilot program for education, so I was actually about to get my degree. Yeah, I was like six months from getting an Associates and all that, but some dumbass cop who was notoriously one of the worst cops on the yard, right—and there always are some, and you usually know who they are—I try to duck them and not even have any type of interaction with them. But he was on the other side of a door, and they called a move, and the one cop on the inside of the unit wasn't fucking opening the key, he was just over somewhere else. And so this one cop opened it from the other side, and I didn't even know, there's no window or anything, I push the door and it pushes into him, just brushed his shoulder. Then he kind of threw me up against the wall trying to get me to fight him and stuff like that, but I wasn't going for it. Then he did lock me up, and I did I think a month and a half in the hole, and was transferred back to the medium. I could have had a degree, right, but a bogus assault. But then again, honestly though, that's just everyday stuff. Anyone who does any type of large amount of time is going to have these type of incidental interactions. You're going to do hole time, even if you stay straight the whole time with your head down, you're still going to end up going to the hole. Again, I got them more than they got me, most of the time.

bullshit right. But again, I'm just saying, that there is an indie DIY current that are just busting out lots of their own DIY games, and they ain't going for that shit, so I'd like to think that youth is actually down to burn some shit.

Jason Hammond: We've met a few groups who are doing similar things. There's an "Abolitionist Gaming Network," they had a workshop at Bash Back where they were highlighting a few other games. There's another one that Smash MAGA just got in, in New York right now, it's "Games Against the Empire," I think it's an outdoor event happening in New York later this month that we got inside, we got accepted. So there are plenty of people trying to carve these spaces out, although definitely you're right, the perception is that it's like it's like GamerGate.

Eric King: I had no idea. I don't want to sound like a jackass, I just didn't know. This stuff is beyond me.

Jason Hammond: There's plenty of leftish, lefty streamers. Like HasanAbi everyone knows. Thought Slime is another YouTuber, or BreadTube is I think how they self-identify as. And there's gamer leftists that have YouTube channels where they touch on political issues, and sometimes it's just exposing this fucking right-wing grifter liar type thing. But, yeah, there is a scene, and I think that it has potentially become more ubiquitous, because gaming is a thing that millions of people do. Maybe they said that we'd never make a career out of it as kids, like as a video game tester, but now there's billions of dollars. Beyond that, we're more into the Indie gaming thing anyway, like unique ideas—there's games that deal with mental illness, and gender identity and all that. There's a great avenue for ideas.

Eric King: I might be ignorant about this also. But Jeremy, I thought your work was priceless, about giving information to people who wouldn't have it. Basically what you did with hacking is the exact same thing you're doing with prison. It's tangible. And once again I could be a dummy, but I don't see hacking happening, I don't see government stuff given to people to help spread knowledge. Is my perception right, and if so, what's going on?

Jeremy Hammond: I mean, it's a good question. I think everybody's sitting here wondering, "Where the hell is Anonymous, why the fuck!" I'll say

in the way of an actual Insurrection, but...

Eric King: Without a doubt. Without a doubt. I want to jump back to something, Jason, that you said. And you both can touch on it, but I found it interesting. You said that these spaces—it can be video games or electronic—aren't really a stronghold for far leftist, for anarchist, anti-fascist, whatever. Why do you think that is, and what do we do to counter it more? Because you two are the only two I've ever met, obviously you'd know more, but I don't know any besides the brothers Hammond. So why do you think that is, and what can we do to enhance that?

Jason Hammond: Like other avenues where leftist ideas and anarchist ideas aren't present?

Jeremy Hammond: I gotta push back on that just a little bit, because I think that there actually is a very exciting current among—I mean, you use Discord man? Come on, man, honestly a lot of young hackers and coders...

Eric King: I don't know what that is.

Jeremy Hammond: See? But dude, it's queer as fuck, it's commie as fuck, it's kind of our thing, honestly. I don't think it's entirely all GamerGate.

Eric King: Is that a gamer thing?

Jason Hammond: GamerGate was basically the sexist dogpiling of femme gamers. It basically is like an early alt-right phenomenon where it would be like "Dog pile the woke in gaming" type of thing, where they call them hordes or flocking of online accounts. It's just another place for people to insert sexism and racism, and it was called GamerGate. It was kind of a conspiracy theory—who the hell was one of the main progenitor of that particular one...

Jeremy Hammond: They targeted women in gaming, reviewers, developers, and stuff like that. But, you know, gaming generally has been very much attached to the military establishment—Call of Duty, most of these games are actually training. America's Army was a training first-person shooter and stuff like that. And mostly it's the tired old narrative, good guys, bad guys, cops, robbers, terrorists, American soldiers, all this

Eric King: You talked about the email situation and not everyone listening will always understand what that means. So, when you're in the feds to get email you log into your TRULINC, it's a TRULINC system, and you pay money. And then SIS, if you are not on any restrictions, your mail just flows in, your email you can read it basically the same time. Jeremy, will you explain what you were talking about when you said the once a week thing?

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah. And they told me when I got there that they were going to do this. SIS is like the intelligence, the detectives of the prison. It stands for intelligence, but I've never attributed that to any cops, right?

Eric King: The dumbest piece of pieces of shit I've ever met.

Jeremy Hammond: You know, you can get them just by a false cover most of the time, because they can't even read! So, anyways, my emails, they did turn my emails on, but when I sent an email, it wouldn't actually arrive until an SIS actually sat down and looked at the queue and clicked the button each time. They screen them before they're received or sent because they think that you're going to incite or plot crimes or whatever, you know what I mean.

And I'm just going to take this moment, something I want to bring up later, but I definitely think that the lack of internet access, period, to people behind bars, is one of the biggest atrocities of this system. Granted, there's plenty, obviously, to be said, but the fact that we're locking people up for years and years and years without access to the same set of information, or the ability to look stuff up on their own—going into the world without apartments or jobs, can't even use that stuff without a smartphone, never having used one. I never had a smartphone until I was released from prison. And I'm good at computers, I caught up. But just knowing that this is one other way that they keep people down, and so my big thing is honestly: get the internet to the people behind bars. Get them fucking phones, unrestricted, unmonitored. That's why we're doing stuff like sending It's Going Down newsletters and all the books. We'll talk about it later. But, yeah, that was my email situation, which is to say it's not email actually, it's not actually internet and stuff like that, it's like a glorified texting service that charges you out the ass. It's some weird dystopian monitoring future, which is the future they want for all of us,

which is something I would like to talk about later, because we're definitely trying to stop this tech fascist dystopia.

Eric King: I once sent an email to my wife. This was when I did a month and a half at a low when I first started, and I sent an email, and I said like "I love you this many times." And it was like I just typed random numbers, and I had to go in and talk to SIS, and they said they're going to try to prosecute me. They said it was like passing messages. These fucking lowlife scum.

Jason, did you face anything like that? You were at a minimum, but it's still prison. Was there anything like that for your calls or mail or anything?

Jason Hammond: I did get a lot of mail, which was key. And we know and this needs to be said. We need to continue on. That was really what kind of flagged me in their mind. Like, okay, why is this person getting mail? So they looked me up and they said, "Yeah, we know who you are. You're not doing anything." I did do a few writings that were published here and there, but I didn't get as much scrutiny as I could have. They wanted to let me know that they were aware, and they also didn't want a scene because I was getting a lot of books and letters. I would say that they were curious about me, but I didn't have any reason to particularly think that they needed to put me anywhere particular, or had any evidence that they were doing any monitoring of the letters.

Eric King: I do want to talk about support. There's good and bad about prison support, for real. None of us are perfect, none of them are perfect, but it is a lifeline. I also know that different parts of our movement support in different ways. Like the Earth Liberation Front or Animal Liberation Front people will get a thousand letters a day. I talked to Jake [Conroy] who said he was getting 100 letters a week. Anti-fascists will get that crowd. You both were very different in your charges, so I'd like to know about the individual support you received. Anything that you wish they had known that they weren't able to do or didn't do?

Jeremy Hammond: I mean, honestly we were some of the lucky ones that actually had the attention and support of the people at large. As we both know, when mail comes around, I mean, most folks over the years are just forgotten and abandoned. No fault of their own, or even of their loved

has been riddled with encoded misogyny and sexism—it's like a battleground, really, where I think maybe there's not enough anarchist or leftist voices. It's a another kind of area which we could put these sort of messages in it. And it's fun! We put memes like the Twisted Tea, which is the official drink of anti-racists a few years ago—remember that time Twisted Tea, someone smacked a racist in the face?

Jeremy Hammond: Have you ever seen that meme, Eric?

Eric King: No.

Jason Hammond: Oh yeah you gotta see that meme, the Twisted Tea meme. Someone dropped the N-bomb and being all racist in the store, and the dude was trying to buy a Twisted Tea, so he smacked the dude with the Twisted Tea, and it became an instant hit for a while. Then there's "Soup For Your Family," of course, there's the milkshake for Andy Ngo.

Jeremy Hammond: You fight the Q-Anon Shaman in the capital.

Eric King: He was at Englewood when I was in the SHU. It was him and two others, including this abortion shooter. And because the Q-Anon punk got that special permission from the judge, they had to go to Sprouts and buy him special food, that motherfucker.

Jeremy Hammond: Man...

Eric King: Yeah, I was like, "You fucking pieces of shit." He's a little fella too, he's like 5'5". He did a psych evaluation, that's why he was there, and they wrote him a thing saying he shouldn't be in prison, it would be too hard. I've never seen anyone get that write-up before, like from Psych. You pieces of shit! Sorry for diverting.

Jason Hammond: We love to dunk on the Q-Anon Shaman in particular, but all the Jan-Sixers, many of them made to our game. The Confederate Flag guy is up in there. You battle Rudy Giuliani, he's obvious. But, yeah, it's really ridiculous with the Jan-Sixers kind of thing, with the "Oh, we're political prisoners. We're hostages of the state." It was interesting when Marjorie Taylor Green said, "You need to defund the FBI." It's like, they did an insurrection. Why the fuck!? Everyone saying now—when's the lib insurrection, right? I think Liberals are more likely to be the ones getting

to the orderly who would pass it to the next cell, and we'd have conversations about that shit, because you guys cared enough to send it. It didn't just go to me, it went to... Well, there was only five other people, but it went to five other people! Pass that info on! How many complaints have you two gotten for your handwriting?

Jason Hammond: I got one from you!

Eric King: Yeah, I can't be the only one!

Jason Hammond: We all want to change society, but I don't think that this is ever going to change, our handwriting. And even our spelling, when we're typing, it looks the same. I don't know how it works.

Eric King: Jason, tell me about the video game.

Jason Hammond: Okay, so it was actually a thing both me and Jeremy thought would be a good kind of project for us both to start off on. We're actually both—well, they didn't call it Retro Gaming back then, it was just gaming, like Nintendo, we were born in the year of Our Lord Nintendo. We grew up on this stuff, and I've played a little bit as adult, if you can call me that. When Jeremy got out, he saw Jan 6 in the halfway house, then we both lived together, and we're like, "Oh, this just looks like a fucking video game." It was a good project that we engaged together that we could amplify the message of anti-fascism and talk about these dynamics and great art that would be of interest to folks, even if it was just a cathartic game that you play on your mobile when you're anywhere. It was also kind of a testing thing to see where Jeremy—he had his PO who was watching him—this is a safer type way to contribute to the movement, like it's a form of art. It's a free game of course. It's on Steam and many other platforms, you can play at SmashMAGA.com. You play as antifa, and it's like the Mario Black Bloc. It's multiplayer, retro, the twin-stick shooter arcade style. And we've been continually doing levels over the last few years as more dynamics occurred. The early levels were like a Vaccination Site, there was like a CHAZ-type level to try to defend the space against cops and and bootlickers who were try to cause trouble to the autonomous space. Now we have levels like Campus Encampments, we have a Crash The Conventions level, we have a Mad MAGA level where you blow up pipelines. In a video game, of course, "in Minecraft"—I mean Smash MAGA, you know. Real educational stuff! Because gaming kind of

ones and stuff like that, but it's a damn shame that people are just everyday folks. So we do a lot of prisoner support and solidarity now. We definitely support political prisoners and stuff like that. We have formations for those type of things, but we definitely also are "free them all," like we don't put political prisoners or anybody else on any type of pedestal. We support everybody.

That being said, we had a tremendous amount of support. I did especially. I had the type of case that was actually kind of acceptable to a lot of more mainstream liberals, because government transparency, right, like it's an easy thing for people.

Eric King: I saw you in *Wired*.

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, I mean, honestly, I got support from some people who sometimes say that, "Oh, he's not a criminal." Like I'm just "Hmm, well..." I'm also involved in militant direct action and support a lot of other things that maybe you would—so I did try to use that to advocate for abolition and support all folks.

The next question, support comes in many forms. I got mail every day and got books every day. It was so amazing to go to court and see our friends and family in court. Like Jason said, they notice that the person is supported and loved and stuff like that. I think that maybe puts them on guard, that they think they are less likely to be able to do somethings to some people if they think that there's eyes on the situation. So that's why phone zaps and stuff like that are also important. Stuff like that works!

Eric King: Yeah, damn, they work! I had an argument with an elder who was trying to discourage people from doing phone call-ins, like, fuck, these things saved my life. What are we talking about? This isn't about me; I apologize. You got me hot.

Jeremy Hammond: No, no - you're saying an example of how that shit actually made a material difference in your life, and honestly for most folks that's what they're looking for is a little bit of attention from the public to the situation. If only people on the outside knew what was happening! So every time someone on the inside is throwing that beacon up—they send a message or a phone zap, can you please tell people about this situation?—they're reaching out for support over the wire, and we got

to answer the call! It's actually extremely satisfying giving it to them raw on the phone and yelling, talking circles around these foolios. You know, when you first call them, they might think that they're just talking to a friend or family who actually doesn't know anything and they think they could talk any kind of way. You know how guards talks to a prisoner, right, like "Well that's just the way it is." But we'll be like, "Well, actually, Program Statement." "Well, actually, we are an authorized publisher." "Actually, you are violating Mandela Act, this Illinois Law." "Let me talk to your supervisor." "Also, what's your name?" You know what I mean. And I record every call, too.

Eric King: Of course you do!

Jeremy Hammond: Hell yeah I do. We gotta let these people know that they got eyes on them, and we let the people inside know that we got their back.

Eric King: Jason, how was your support?

Jason Hammond: So, you know, the book are key. I kind of don't read as much as I did back then anymore, but books are a lifeline. You could always keep reading, I guess. But, anyways, the letters of support, it was really good to hear from people. Sometimes it's hard or difficult for people to be like "Okay you got the pen and paper, I'm going to write someone who I've never talked to who doesn't know who I am. I never met this person, but I support the cause which is maybe why I'm writing them." A pen pal situation. Because I've written prisoners, too, of course, you're talking about your day, and you're like "Oh, does this person really want to hear about my cool bike ride" or something? I don't know, but I smiled when I heard about people telling me about the cool things that that they were doing in their lives, like this tree or something, because like I missed a tree when I was in there right? It was good to hear that, and I know it might seem like you don't want to like feel like you're bragging to someone who can't enjoy the same sort of simple pleasures like that, but it is nice to hear that people are actually doing things. More importantly, or I say also important, is people were writing and telling about—you know, using different names of course, but just like—the cool things that they had heard about or something that people were doing to continue on the struggle. I think that is another great way to support the movement for political prisoners is to continue the torch—you know, literally The Torch

Eric King: Actually, talk about why you do that. Why do you print zines? What's the value in that?

Jeremy Hammond: Many reasons. We do a lot of prisoner support, books to prisoners, zines and stuff like that, and it's because honestly the wall is a physical wall and a fence and stuff like that, but it's not just for people, it's also for ideas, right? Folks inside often have no access to actual knowledge and information and updates about what people, especially movements, are doing out there, other than the TV and the newspaper or something. So we send lots of books and lots of zines and internet printouts to folks inside, but it's also the inverse too: not only are people on the inside obviously oblivious of what's happening in the world, but people on the outside are frankly oblivious about what the realities of what's happening behind bars. So a lot of our work is also publishing writings and art and artwork for incarcerated authors. We make zines written by prisoners, that type of stuff.

Eric King: That's awesome. God bless.

Jeremy Hammond: Well, it's like Coyote said, zines are our real weapons, and it's time to get lit. You know, the pen is often mighter than the sword in some cases, especially if you think of how isolated each one of these jails and prisons are, like how are they going to hear about this whole Jailhouse Lawyers Speak strike coming up in December? You might be in a type of lockdown prison, but the dude in the unit next over, they might be going in on some hunger strike, unified convict type stuff, and you don't even know about it unless you hear about it from one of the guards, the trustees, or something like that. So, when you put that flag up, we put that shit in the newsletter, we make sure 300 other people get it the next month. We're basically trying to build up a web, a network of resistance through their walls, man. And so zines are often the type of publication that could get under the radar, like where they got book bans and stuff like that, well, this is from a security point of view often no different than a letter. Now, granted, the book bans and the censorship has just gone off the chain this past couple years, and that's one of the struggles that we're fighting against, to pierce that wall, right? But, nevertheless, zines are one of our best weapons.

Eric King: Jeremy, I used to get zines from you in ADX. They made it through the mail, and then I'd pass that shit on, you'd slide under the door

of something again, you know what I mean, even if I'm not throwing bricks at every fucking thing, but just to be part of the continuum of the movement and stuff like that, to see people. It was difficult for me, man. I still actually cry pretty spontaneously sometimes. I still have some weird habits from prison. But other than that I can't complain, I got a lot going for me.

Eric King: I think it's important that people that listen understand that we carry that trauma. Jeremy, you saw me talk several months ago, and I was just weeping.

Jeremy Hammond: Me too, man. I was crying my eyes off hearing you.

Eric King: Right! I know you understand. Jason, you might also, but like we carry that shit with us, it doesn't just stop at the door, and those habits that we develop, those don't just stop. I still get mad at my kids and want to scream and cry if they leave dirty dishes out. You can't do that.

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, cutting people in line and stuff like that, you'd be tripping over shit.

Eric King: Yes! Jeremy, I'm giving you a big hug. Jason, I'm giving you a big hug. Both of you. So, let's talk about what happened next. You're both free. What direction does your activism go? What do you start doing, and what problems do you face, if there are any? Just tell me about what your free life activism has started to look like and then what it developed into.

Jeremy Hammond: We're going to leave some specifics out! But, yeah, we're very much involved in shit out here.

Eric King: Are you guys just sharing that green drink, or are there multiple green drinks?

Jason Hammond: This one's empty!

Jeremy Hammond: Other stuff, you know the range of resistance isn't just protest marches, although we are pretty prolifically at them things, but we're also involved in a range of stuff like everything from writing, to playing in a band, to music, to printing. Printing zines is one of our mainstays, actually.

[Network]. But, you know, the political projects that they were involved in, you're continuing to support and move forward. Like when you're writing someone in prison, you're thinking like "So they're a prisoner, and I'm in the Free World." Like, one, you're not in the "Free World," and two, they are also free with their own ideas as well and their own thoughts in one way in one level. The thing is, maybe they got caught, but really maybe you could be in the exact same position they are in one day, and maybe that the person who we're writing to might not have been caught. Just trying to break down the barriers in a number of different ways. I will say to one point Jeremy made, and everyone knows, is that prisoners are some of the most underlooked folks and forgotten about in society. It's not a solution like "Oh, if every prisoner got books then it would be an OK society." No, we need to burn the prison down. But there are so many folks who are not getting support to get them through some of the most vulnerable and darkest moments potentially in their life. And every single letter that goes through has potential to change someone, and the people around them, too, because when I was getting the books, I would be sharing them, of course, everyone was like "Oh, who are you getting all these books."

Eric King: I knew for a fact you both did. I would have never doubted for a second.

Jason Hammond: Of course. I would get articles, too, and there would be a little area where there used to be a fire extinguisher, and I would leave articles there, like I'm just leaving it there, so someone walking by would pick it up and read it. I'd see people reading it, it's great. When you support one person in prison, you actually support the people around them too.

Eric King: I love you both. So, let's talk about when you got out of prison. You both did different spectrums of time, but time is time, and getting out can be hard. It can be great, it can be scary, it can be exciting, so I'd like to know what your experiences were like the first six months, year, two years, like what you struggled with, and what gave you excitement, what gave you joy? Just stuff like that, just a broad goods and bads or sads, nervous and excitements and greats.

Jason Hammond: Wow, yeah. I'll go first. I got out on April Fools day, and when they called my name I really did think it was a goddamn joke.

Because it was like Friday, I was actually set to be released in the weekend, sometimes they do it later, right, like after the weekend. But they let me out on Friday, April 1, so that was cool. But the readjustment thing, I didn't do a ton of time like you guys did. A lot of my friends were still around in the same neighborhoods and areas—I did 14 months. But that's still enough time that people move on from their things. It's definitely a little bit of a culture shock. One of the things that did happen was I became more attuned to the electronic monitoring thing, because post-release you might get, you know, the fucking ankle shackle. That has, of course, since expanded as a carceral tactic "e-incarceration." So I was trying to apply for jobs when I got out, but this shit is so poorly run I never got the message back many times, so I missed interviews. Also, I missed my grandparents funeral just because they didn't answer their phone enough to get sent an approval to go on an out of state visit. You see little things, like once you're out, you think you're out, but actually, you're not, and I don't mean just beyond the three months. I applied to various jobs and just get rejected on no basis—of course, a felony, right? And that's really an issue, I guess most people think "Well you're out of prison, you're okay, you're free now." It's like, I don't know. Besides the systemic levels, there's so much psychological levels. We develop a lot of tools to help exist in this society after release. We have a lot of patience, we developed that in prison, and maybe perspective. These things do carry, they do carry on, and you see people who don't, and you're like, "Oh, that's unfortunate, maybe you don't have the patience enough to give someone a chance to learn maybe from their ways" or whatever, you know, or just learn to deal with stuff in a certain way. Once you leave prison, I guess you carry it with you for the rest of your life.

Jeremy Hammond: So, as a matter of fact, next week is my four year anniversary being out. I was released in November, mid November, that's four years I've been out. I was at the halfway for two or three months, then in home confinement for a couple weeks on the band, and then I was on paper for a year or so until I was lucky to have an attorney beat my supervised release conditions completely, after a year you could file for that. But, yeah, it was tough, but then again I would say I was lucky and fortunate to have a community and a family who did take care of most of my physical needs, that I didn't have to actually struggle like most people do, so there's that.

I was on a bunch of weird ass monitoring shit, that was the most notable thing about my release. My computer and my phone had to have a device on it that recorded all my traffic and all my messages and all the websites I visit, and she'd look at my screen and stuff like that. And I had to pay for it, too, 60 bucks a month to some private ass company for basically a virus.

Eric King: Those filthy bastards made you pay for it?

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah, and she would comment to me sometimes randomly about some of the messages I'm sending and stuff like that. She was actually on it. Twice she like threatened to violate me over stuff I was doing on the computer, like this petty bullshit, frivolous stuff. She tried to say that—one of my conditions, I had a bunch of weird conditions, like you can't affiliate with a civil disobedience group, or you can't affiliate with electronic civil disobedience, you can't use encryption, you can't use a proxy server, stuff like this that my probation officer frankly just didn't even understand those things. She had a suite of tools that gave her keyword notifications that flagged stuff like that, and so she tried to violate me twice because of our video game that we made, the Smash MAGA video game which is an anti-fascist brawler, you could beat up a bunch of Trump supporters and all that shit, you know, cool stuff, right. So she actually tried to say "We need to go to the judge to see if she would consider this game anti-fascist, and see if anti-fascist is civil disobedience, and be a violation," and I'm like "Yeah right, go do that, by the way, go do that!"

Jason Hammond: This was 2021 so antifa was still in the mind of all law enforcement as terrorist.

Jeremy Hammond: Yeah I was in the halfway house when I watched January 6. So then they tried to violate me again, because they saw that we posted our game on website "GamingForLinux.com," which is simply a place where people could see games that are written for Linux. So she tried "Oh Linux, I typed 'is Linux a proxy server,' we gotta violate you. You can't use it." Eventually, once she asked the IT person in the office, maybe they laughed that shit out of there. But other than that I can't complain, honestly, as far as the restrictions go. Chicago has a lot of people on probation, and they got a lot of other shit they worry about. I was still going to demos. And so that was, frankly, like one of the small victories that has just meant everything just to be out there in the street, to be part